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Islam and Civil Society

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The post-Cold War has been a period of civil disorder and of civil order. It has witnessed calls for a New World Order and signs of a New World Disorder. If Bosnia, Algeria, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Rwanda have reminded us of the breakdown of the state and of civil society, South Africa and the new democracies of Latin America have signaled that a true civil society with representative government can emerge in areas where once authoritarian governments with elaborate state security systems appeared to prove that "might made right." Yet, in many parts of the Muslim world, civil society and democratization are under siege or in retreat. If some blame Islamic governments (Sudan, Afghanistan, and until recently Iran) and Islamist movements, others cite the intransigence of authoritarian states and the military (Algeria, Turkey, Tunisia) to tolerate and abide by the results of open electoral politics. At the same time, some political analysts and policymakers legitimate those who speak of an incompatibility of Islam and democracy or Islam and civil society, rooted in a clash of civilizational values.

A "selective" headline or crisis-oriented approach to Muslim politics, which focuses on the acts of extremists, from hostages and kidnappings in the Middle East or New York's World Trade Center bombing, has too often provided the lens through which Islam and Muslim politics have been regarded. It has equated Islam and all Islamic movements with violence and religious extremism and led some to speak of a "clash of civilizations" between the Muslim world and the West This perspective has become the convenient excuse for some in the West to equate Islam and Muslim civilization with authoritarianism or to declare that Islam and democracy are incompatible. Some Muslim rulers in the post-Gulf war period have used the threat of religious extremism to renege on promises of greater political liberalization and to restrict the development of civil society.

Islam, Democracy and Civil Society At the dawn of the twenty-first century, democratization and civil society are common themes throughout much of the world. From the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to the Middle East, Asia, and Africa, voices have been raised that call for power sharing (greater political participation, representation, and self-determination) and with it more emphasis on government accountability, the rule of law, and social justice. Non-state actors and organizations (NGOs), from political parties and trade unions to professional associations, educational, financial and medical services, women's and human rights organizations, have become more visible.
Religion has been a significant factor in the reassertion of civil society in many Muslim societies. The creation of modern (and often authoritarian) states in the Muslim world which extend governmental control over state and society and over religion and religious institutions as well as the tendency to regard civil society as a modern construct have often obscured the existence of civil society

in Islam. Islamic history provides examples of many non-state actors, institutions and organizations that served as intermediaries between the ruler/government and the people, between state and society. Religious endowments (*waqf*, pl. *awqaf*) supported schools, universities, hostels, hospitals, and social welfare activities. The development of Islamic law (*shariah*) itself was often the product of private individuals or scholars (*ulama*) and schools (*madhab*, pl. *madhahib*) that were independent of the state and indeed initially sought to limit and curb the power of rulers. Sufi brotherhoods (*tariqahs*) and masters (*shaykhs* or *pirs*) provided not only spiritual guidance but also significant educational and social services in Muslim societies. Finally, guilds played an important role in the economic and social life of Muslim cities. Professional groups or guilds were organized around trade and commerce. Their activities included "regulating the production of goods, maintaining a professional code of ethics, overseeing prices." Guilds often relied upon religion and religious rituals for rites of initiation and celebration and to legitimate their origins and activities such as that of the market supervisor (*muhtasib*) who was responsible for the enforcement (*hisbah*) of public morals.

Contemporary Muslim Politics In the contemporary Muslim world, Islam has become closely associated with the emergence or expansion of civil society. While some Islamic activists and movements have sought to destroy or overthrow the state, many have commandeered or championed the institutions of civil society. Proclaiming Islam as the solution to the political and socioeconomic ills of their societies, Islamists have often constituted both an ideological alternative and, on the ground, a state within the state. They have not only challenged but also concretely responded to the failures and inadequacies of governments and elites by creating alternative non-governmental political, economic, and social welfare associations and institutions. Across the Muslim world, Islamically oriented political parties, professional associations, social welfare agencies, educational and financial institutions have proliferated in Egypt, Algeria, Lebanon, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia. Given the historic significance and centrality of Islam in Muslim life and its continued presence and vitality in Muslim societies, the relationship of Islam to democratization and civil society is both a timely and an important issue.

Islam & Modern State

For decades, analysis and understanding of the development of societies has been seen in terms of the modern state: its boundaries, legitimacy, institutions, and functions. The modern state has been exemplified by its growing power, control, and centralization as the state absorbed or extended its power and

influence to outlaw or control the institutions of civil society. Authoritarian rulers have used the modern state to control both politics and society.

In recent years, social scientists and political analysts have debated the future of the nation state. Modern states and rulers have been challenged by opposition movements. Many are states, relatively recently created (post WWII), with artificial boundaries, often a legacy of European colonialism, whose rulers have tenuous legitimacy and are dependent for their stability on their military and secret police. Religious (nationalist and sectarian), ethnic and tribal warfare in Sudan, Bosnia-Herzogena, Kosovo, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kashmir and the Central Asian republics have provided shocking examples of the fragility of the modern state.

Increasingly in recent years, analysis of Muslim societies, their problems and future, has been placed within the framework of civil society and democratization. The breakup of the Soviet Union and liberation of Eastern Europe and events within the Muslim world have led to a heated debate over the political future and possibilities of Muslim communities and societies. Both in the Muslim world and in the West, issues of the compatibility of Islam and democracy, of political participation, pluralism, women's rights, and tolerance are discussed and contested.

The Challenge of Islamic Revivalism

Despite significant differences, the resurgence of Islam as a significant socio-political alternative reveals common causes and concerns. Among the more significant are: the failure of secular nationalism (liberal nationalism, Arab nationalism and socialism) to provide a strong sense of national identity, the need for independence from foreign influence and hegemony, and the ability to produce strong and prosperous societies. Governments (most of which are non-elected, authoritarian, "security states") have failed to establish or strengthen their political legitimacy. They have been criticized by opposition voices for a failure to achieve economic self-sufficiency or prosperity, to stem the growing gap between rich and poor, to halt widespread corruption, liberate Palestine, resist Western political and cultural hegemony. Both the political and religious establishments have been criticized: the former as a minority of western, secular elite more concerned with power and privilege, and, in the Sunni Muslim world, the latter as a religious leadership coopted by governments who often support or control mosques and religious universities and institutions.

Political Islam is in many ways the successor of failed nationalist programs. They included: the failure of Arab nationalism/socialism, signaled by the 1967 Six Day Arab-Israeli war, of Muslim nationalism in the Pakistan-

Bangladesh civil war of 1971; the shattering of the Lebanese confessional mosaic by its civil war (mid-70s to 1990); and economic failures in North Africa, Egypt, Turkey, and Jordan in the late1980s and early 1990s. Many founders of Islamic movements were formerly participants in nationalist movements: the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's founder, Hasan al-Banna, Tunisia's Rashid Ghannoushi of the Renaissance Party), Algeria's Abbasi Madani of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), and Necmettin Erbakan of Turkey's Welfare Party.

Islamic movements have offered an Islamic solution, a third alternative to capitalism and communism. They argue that a modern Western bias or orientation, secularism and dependence on Western models of development, have proven politically inadequate and socially corrosive, undermining the identity and moral fabric of Muslim societies. Islamists assert that Islam is not just a collection of beliefs and ritual actions, but a comprehensive ideology or framework for Muslim society. Islam embraces personal as well as public life. Islamists call for the implementation of Islamic law, the Shariah, as the comprehensive blueprint for society. While the majority seek to work within the system, to bring about change from within society, a small but significant minority believe that they have a mandate from God and that the rulers in the Muslim world are anti-Islamic. They seek to topple governments, seize power, and impose their vision or interpretation of Islam upon society.

Islamic movements have been particularly strong among the younger generation, university graduates and young professionals, and the lower middle class. They recruit from mosques and universities, finding fertile ground among the politically and economically disenfranchised or oppressed. Contrary to popular expectations, their strength is not in the religious faculties and humanities so much as in science, engineering, education, law, and medicine. Organizations like the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, Jordan, and Sudan, Turkey's Refah (Welfare) Party (and now Virtue or Fazilet), Tunisia's Ennahda, South Asia's Jamaat-i-Islami, Malaysia's ABIM, or Indonesia's Muhammadiya consist in great part of university graduates and professionals. Dr. Hassan al-Turabi, leader of Sudan's National Islamic Front, holds a doctorate in law from the Sorbonne. The senior leadership of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood includes judges, lawyers, and physicians. The Islamic Salvation Front's (FIS) Abbasi Madani earned a doctorate in education from a British university. Seventy-six percent of the FIS candidates in municipal and parliamentary elections held post-graduate degrees. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the now-suppressed Refah party, is a German trained engineer. Amien Rais, former leader of Indonesia's Muhamaddiyya and now Speaker of parliament, like Nurcholish Madjid, leader of Paramedina (an intellectual reform organization)

holds a doctorate from the University of Chicago. Similar comments could be made about the leadership of many other Islamic organizations.

In general, most Islamic movements are urban-based, and draw heavily from lower middle and middle classes. A major portion of their leadership and membership are middle class professionals as well as the economically deprived. In the past, financial support has come from individuals within countries and from governments such as Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iran, and the Gulf states. In many Muslim countries and societies today, an alternative elite exists, modern educated but more self-consciously Islamically-oriented and committed to social and political activism as a means for creating a more Islamic society or system of government. This social phenomenon is reflected in civil society by the presence and often dominance of Islamists in professional syndicates or associations of lawyers, engineers, professors, and physicians. Where permitted to live and participate in society, they are found in every sector of society: government, the professions, and even the military. Thus, they provide an avowedly "Islamic alternative" to the power and privilege of more secular elites.

Democracy and Civil Society in the Muslim World

As in many other parts of the world, including the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Africa, the history of the modern Muslim world reveals a majority of authoritarian regimes. The Muslim experience has been one of kings, military, and ex-military rulers possessing tenuous legitimacy and propped up by their military and security forces. Indeed, the states of the Middle East are commonly referred to as security (*mukhabarat*) states. At best, many have been authoritarian states with democratic facades; parliamentary institutions and political parties that existed at the sufferance of rulers. At the same time, militant Islamic movements have often projected a religious authoritarianism and political intolerance of divergent viewpoints which parallels that of secular authoritarianism. Yet, in recent years, the call for greater liberalization and democratization has become common and widespread. Throughout much of the Muslim world diverse sectors of society, secular and religious, leftist and rightist, educated and uneducated increasingly use greater political participation or democratization as the litmus test by which to judge the legitimacy of governments and political movements alike.

Despite this reality, there are those who have increasingly charged that the absence of democracy is due to peculiar characteristics of Arab and Muslim culture. Some maintain that Arab culture and/or Islam are inherently authoritarian and thus incompatible with democracy. Others assert that the introduction of democracy is premature. Still others believe that democracy is a

product of the western experience that may well be inappropriate or non-transferable to other cultures.

The movement for democratization in the Muslim world has raised widespread discussion about the future of democracy in the Muslim world and the creation or promotion of civil society. Many Muslim countries, in common with other developing societies, face serious obstacles to the creation of strong civil societies: authoritarian governments whose legitimacy and stability are often dependent upon security forces, economic underdevelopment (chronic unemployment, lack of adequate housing), ethnic and regional strife (often a legacy of the artificial borders created by colonial powers), weak institutions and infrastructures.

The Quiet Revolution: Islam and Civil Society

The specter of "other Irans" or of extremist/terrorist groups were the dominant images of Muslim politics in the 1980s. However, in the late 1980s and 1990s the presence of a more nuanced, broader-based, diverse reality, became increasingly evident. Civic institutions such as associations of professional (journalists, physicians, engineers, university professors), human rights and women's organizations, political parties sprang up across the Muslim world. Beneath the radical monolithic facade, the world of small marginalized groups of extremists on the periphery of society, a quiet social and political revolution had taken place. While a militant rejectionist minority had sought to impose change from above through violent revolution or holy wars, many other Islamic activists actualized and institutionalized their faith through a bottom-up approach. They pursued a gradual transformation, Islamization or re-Islamization, of society through words and example, as well as social and political activism.

The comprehensive vision of Islamic renewal or reawakening from its early trailblazers, Hasan al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood and Mawlana Mawdudi's Jamaat-I Islami, to contemporary movements is the desire to reassert Islam in cultural, social and economic life. As a result, Islamic activists and organizations have in fact trained in the professions, participated in professional associations, and created educational, financial, cultural and social institutions and associations. Thus, the majority of activists have not been trained in seminaries to be formal religious scholars (*ulama*) but are graduates of universities trained in the professions, from teaching, engineering and law to medicine, mass communications, and computer science.

In many Muslim countries, Islamic organizations and associations have become part and parcel of the mainstream, institutional forces in civil society.

They have attracted members from the middle and lower middle classes (businessmen, bureaucrats, doctors, engineers, lawyers, journalists) and revenue from non-governmental domestic sources as well as members working in the oil rich countries of the Gulf and Iraq. They have engaged in a broad range of social and political activities, from the creation of Islamic charitable associations (*Jamiyyat Khayriyya*) to participation in parliamentary and professional association elections. Their network of mosques, hospitals, clinics, day care centers, youth clubs, legal aid societies, foreign language schools, banks, drug rehabilitation programs, and publishing houses have multiplied. Islamic private volunteer organizations (PVOs) have filled a void and thus are, in some countries, an implicit critique of the government's ability to provide adequate services, in particular for the non-elite sectors of society. Their services provide an alternative to expensive private institutions or overcrowded public facilities. At the same time, they reinforce a sense of community identity as well as spiritual and moral renewal. Thus, for example, as will be discussed more extensively below, the educational and social programs of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria and the Refah Party in Turkey were an integral part of their activities. They not only provided services but also mobilized popular support and loyalty which could be translated into votes. Militant resistance movements such as Lebanon's Hezbollah and HAMAS in Palestine strengthened their base of popular support and looked after the needs of their members and local citizens. Their combined political opposition and military action were augmented by substantial social services and charitable activities from education to housing and financial support for the families of members killed, wounded or detained by authorities.

It is essential to note that many, if not most, Islamic organizations and NGOs are non-political and non-violent. Thus, in the West Bank and Gaza, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians have been the beneficiaries of services provided by Islamic social and economic institutions. Islamic associations provide support for between 7,000-10,000 orphans, spending between $3-4 million annually for clothes, food, school supplies. Similar services are provided for approximately 5,000 families. Hundreds of Islamic medical clinics in Egypt, ranging from two to three-room clinics attached to a small mosque to major health care centers/hospitals such as the Mustapha Mahmud Islamic Clinic, are also supported by religiously motivated individuals and organizations. Their primary concern is responding to the needs of Egypt's poor and middle class.
The creation of Islamically oriented institutions and the participation of religiously motivated Muslims (political and apolitical) in professional associations, private voluntary organizations and corporate life have contributed to the gradual Islamization of society from below. A greater emphasis on Islamic discourse and symbolism as a source of legitimacy and authority is increasingly more evident throughout much of the Muslim world. This

Islamization from below is not simply due to Islamist movements but also to the activity of Muslim professionals (physicians, psychiatrists, professors, lawyers, journalists, social workers), many of whom are apolitical, but committed to a more Islamically oriented community or society. Their support for religiously motivated projects (educational, medical, economic, social and religio-cultural) is informed by faith not politics.

Social activism has also been accompanied by increased political participation. In Iran, Mehdi Bazargan, the Paris-educated engineer and intellectual who would go on to be Iran's first prime minister after the fall of the shah and return of Ayatollah Khomeini, had emphasized the Islamic character of his Association of Engineers and his Liberation Movement in Iran. They joined with other professional associations such as the Association of Iranian Journalists and National Organization of Physicians as well as clerical leaders to challenge the shah. In Tunisia and Algeria, the Islamic Tendency Movement (later renamed Ennahda) and the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) moved from an apolitical religio-cultural organizations to a sociopolitical movement whose projects for the poor and disenfranchised won supporters from the poor and unemployed. Their promise of a more credible and effective alternative attracted the votes of those who simply wanted to register a vote against the policies of the ruling party. For many of the disenfranchised in Turkey, the Refah (Welfare) Party's social programs in working class neighborhoods became reason enough to support the RP in municipal/local elections in 1994. Similarly, the effectiveness of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood as a social and economic actor resulted in its emergence as a major social actor and opposition group in electoral politics. In the former Soviet Union, the Islamic Renaissance Party surfaced in the 1990s as a political opposition whose agenda included welfare services for the poor, private ownership of property, health programs and ecological projects.

Increased attention to social welfare has been incorporated into the redefinition or broadening of contemporary notions of dawah, religious propagation. The call (*dawah*) to Islam has increasingly become institutionalized, spawning modern organizations from Cairo to Kuala Lumpur. Moreover, many modern dawah organizations have not only called non-Muslims and Muslims to Islam but also become heavily involved in social welfare. ABIM in Malaysia, Diwan Dawat al-Islam in Indonesia, WAMY in Saudi Arabia and the Ansar al-Islam in Nigeria reflect the combination of preaching with education, medical, and other social services. These organizations are transnational as well as national: among the more active are the World Muslim League and the International Islamic Council Dawah and Relief which has focused heavily on refugees.

Political Participation and Civil Society

Throughout the 1980s media images of radical Islamic fundamentalism had been accompanied by charges by many governments in the Muslim world that Islamic movements were simply violent revolutionaries, unrepresentative extremist organizations whose lack of popular support would be evident if elections were held. However, few governments proved willing to test that claim. When political systems were opened up and Islamic organizations were able to participate in elections, the results stunned many in the Muslim world and the West.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, failed economies and mass demonstrations moved governments (Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan) to hold elections. Islamic activists ran as candidates (Egypt and Tunisia refused to grant legal recognition as political parties to the Muslim Brotherhood and *Ennahda* respectively) and in some cases as political parties (Jordan and Algeria). In the post-Gulf war Kuwait and Yemen held elections and King Fahd of Saudi Arabia, after hesitant moves to create an appointed consultative council *(majlis al-shura)* to the king, continued to encounter demands for greater participation and government accountability. The electoral track record of Islamic organizations and the diverse responses of governments to the emergence of Islamists as significant actors in civil society and in Muslim politics may be witnessed in a brief survey of Tunisia, Algeria, Turkey, Egypt, Iran and the Gulf.

Tunisia

After seizing power from Bourghiba in 1987, Zein Abidine Ben Ali promised democratization and held parliamentary elections in April 1989. In early 1989, MTI had renamed itself *Hizb al-Nahda* (The Renaissance Party) in order to comply with Ben Ali's stated position that no single group should monopolize the claim to be Islamic since all Tunisians were Muslim. As one of its leaders had earlier declared, "[we] accepted the rules of the game ... we want to act within the framework of democracy." Yet, in spite of this, the government did not permit it to participate as a legal political party. High inflation, growing unemployment, and increased poverty proved to be consequential: Islamic candidates won 14.5% of the vote nationwide and a stunning 30% in cities like Tunis, Gabes, and Sousse.

The Renaissance Party's early commitment to pluralist politics reflected the thinking of its leaders, in particular Rashid al-Ghannoushi. Al-Nahda's leaders combined the criteria of Islam with that of democracy to critique the Tunisian government and to serve as a platform in al-Nahda's appeal for popular

support. For Ghannoushi, democracy, popular sovereignty and the role of the state multiparty elections, and constitutional law are all part of a "new Islamic thinking" whose roots and legitimacy are found in a fresh interpretation or reinterpretation of Islamic sources. He distinguished between God's sovereignty over the universe and the creation of the state, arguing that "The state is not something from God but from the people...the state has to serve the benefit of the Muslims."

Ghannoushi indicated his willingness to work within the legal framework to improve it by making it more democratic and pluralistic. He maintained that the parliamentary system was the legitimate means for universal participation in the political process through elections, one that fulfills the role of the Islamic institution of a consultative council (*majlis al-shura*). Indeed he declared: "Islam, which enjoins the recourse to *Shura* (consultation) as a principle governing relations between political authority and the people, finds in democracy the appropriate instruments (elections, parliamentary system, separation of powers, etc.) to implement the Shura." Ghannoushi maintained that the Quranic prescription or principle that there is no compulsion in religion a sure basis for religious, cultural, political and ideological pluralism in Muslim society.

In contrast to many other Islamic activists, Ghannoushi has maintained that if the Tunisian people voted Nahda out of power in favor of even a communist or atheist government, then as good Muslims the party would have to accept the verdict of the people. He has called upon the West to apply a similar standard of respect for the people's choice, chiding the West for not promoting its democratic ideals in the Muslim world: "While the West criticizes Islamic governments for not being democratic, it also supports governments who are not democratic and are keeping Islamic movements from developing their ideas.

Algeria

Algeria like Jordan allowed Islamists to participate in electoral politics as political parties not just as indovidual candidates. While the performance of Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists in winning 32 of 80 seats proved an unexpected surprise, the stunning electoral successes of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front proved a decisive turning point.

Algeria had been dominated by a one party dictatorship, the National Liberation Front (FLN), for decades. Socialist and with a strong secular elite and feminist movement, few took Algeria's Islamic movement seriously. The government of Chedli Ben Jadid was faced with intractable economic

difficulties among them a 25% unemployment level, foreign debt of some $20 billion, and food shortages. Following bloody anti-government riots of October 1988, the government felt constrained to hold elections. Algeria, long regarded as one of the most monolithic, single-party political systems in the Arab world, held multi-party elections which included the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique du Salut, FIS), North Africa's first legal Islamic political party, led by Shaykh Ali Abbasi al-Madani. Islamic groups had flourished as Algerian state socialism failed to resolve its social and economic problems. The FIS, with a national organization and an effective mosque and social welfare network, emerged as the largest of these groups and one of the strongest opposition parties. In the June 1990 municipal elections, the first multi-party election since independence in 1962, the FIS scored a stunning victory, capturing 54% of the vote, while the National Liberation Front (FLN) garnered 34%. The victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in municipal elections in 1990 sent a shock wave throughout the world. In the aftermath of elections, the government arrested FIS leaders, Abbasi Madani and Ali Belhadj, the cut off funds from the central government to municipalities which often crippled FIS officials' ability to provide services, and gerrymandered to redraw voting districts more favorably. Despite these precautions, the FLN failed to prevent the FIS from an even more stunning electoral sweep of parliamentary elections. Amidst the euphoria and celebration of Islamists within Algeria and across the Muslim world, the Algerian military intervened, forced the resignation of Algeria's president, arrested FIS leaders, imprisoned more that 10,000 in desert camps/prisons, outlawed the FIS and seized its assets.

In the face of this repression much of the world stood silent. The conventional wisdom had been blind-sided. While most feared and were on their guard against "other Irans," the FIS victory in Algeria raised the specter of an Islamic movement coming to power not through violent revolution but through democratic elections. Ballots not bullets proved to be even more worrisome for many world leaders. The justification for acceptance of the Algerian military's seizure of power was the charge that the FIS merely wished to "hijack democracy;" that they really only believed in "One man, one vote, one time." The threat of violent revolutionary Islam was intensified by fear of the capture of power from within the political system.

Turkey

The seemingly inexplicable power of Islamists at the ballot box was reinforced in secular Turkey, long regarded as a paragon of Muslim secularism, the most secular of Muslim states. The *Refah* (Welfare) Party won mayoral elections in 1994 in more than a dozen major cities, including Ankara and Istanbul. Refah had become an effective presence in civil society through its social service

network, businesses, professional associations, and the media. As Turkish senior politicians squabbled and the West looked on, Refah, after winning 158 seats in the 550 National Assembly in parliamentary elections in December 1995, came to power at the head of a coalition government. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan become Turkey's first Islamist prime minister in its 45 year history.

Welfare used democracy as a yardstick by which to judge the failures of Turkish secularism to be truly pluralistic, to respect the rights of all of its citizens, including their freedom of conscience or right to live according to their religious beliefs. Erbakan had maintained that true secularism (separation of religion from the state) should not only mean state autonomy but religious autonomy. That is, religion also has its autonomy which should respected by and free from state interference. The stats should not intervene in the religious sphere by attempting to regulate dress (the right of women to wear a headscarf or, for that matter, men to wear beards) or religious practice. The WP wished to add a new amendment regarding the definition of secularism to guarantee the right of all people to live in accordance with their religious beliefs. For Turkey's radical secularists, this stance was regarded as a direct threat: "The radical secularists, comprising the majority of the intelligentsia, including a number of leading journalists, believe this stand on the part of RP is a challenge to the secular premises of the state. They think that the RP is concealing its long-term intention to establish an Islamic state in Turkey."

The successes of the WP were due to many factors: the failures of previous governments meant that Welfare garnered the support of its members and of a crossover protest vote from disgruntled voters who would normally support other parties. The vote was as much, if not more, about politics and economics (double and triple-digit inflation, urban poverty, inadequate social services and health care, pollution, congestion, high employment, inadequate housing, crime, corruption) as about religion. Indeed, a 1994 survey found that only one-third of the WP's voters voted primarily because it was an Islamic party. Welfare's focus on voter issues like employment, pensions, health care, housing, and environment and its indictment of the failures of society reflected in the WP's slogans of "clean politics" and a "just order," proved effective. The reason for the successes of Welfare mayors in many municipalities such as Istanbul and Ankara was widely acknowledged: "Refah Party mayors have offered better services than their predecessors and worked hard to improve public services. They have reduced corruption and nepotism in the municipalities and acted more professionally than other parties of the left and right." The combined track records of many Welfare municipal governments and of the WP workers in neighborhoods brought effective social change and made for a formidable force in electoral politics. At the same time, its support for private enterprise and economic liberalization drew support from small

businessmen who resented the state's continued ownership of as much as 60% of the financial and manufacturing sector, its failure to curb the powers of big industrialists, and its dependence on European imports. Thus, Welfare enjoyed the support of MUSIAD, a Muslim business association founded in 1990 which advocates full liberalization and privatization of the economy.

During Erbakan's brief tenure as prime minister, Welfare encouraged the expanded role of religion in society: increasing the number of schools, religious foundations, businesses, banks, social services, and the media. Both secular Muslims and religious minorities such as Turkey's Alevi Muslim minority (perhaps 20% of its 98% Muslim population), despite the public assurances of Welfare, were skeptical about the WP's commitment to pluralism. They questioned whether the WP's redefinition of the state would affect its ability to respect the rights of others – other (non-Welfare) Muslims, non-believers and religious minorities. Cynics charged that the WP, like the FIS in Algeria, was using the democratic system to come to power in order to dismantle Turkey's democratic and secular state.

Erbakan's biggest obstacle proved predictably to be the military. Turkey's military has a long history of influence and intervention in domestic politics. Staunch secularists, some might say militant secularists, with a low opinion of Turkey's politicians, they have consistently espoused the role of defenders of Kemalism and have had an allergic reaction to any form of religion in public life, from female students right to wear a headscarf (*hejab*) to Islamist politics. Among the common justifications for previous coups was the claim that the government had betrayed Ataturk's principle of secularism. Thus, it took every occasion to signal its concerns about any compromising of Turkey's secular principles. They instituted a new purge of officers who were suspected of being Islamists. (Grounds could be the fact that an officer's wife wore a headscarf or that they prayed at a mosque). In Spring 1997, it presented the Erbakan government with a set of 18 demands, designed to stem an Islamist threat to the secular state. These included restrictions on the wearing of Islamic dress, measures to prevent Islamists from entering the military or government administration, and a mandate that the Imam-Hatep schools, religious schools, that it believed taught religious propaganda and served as a training ground for Islamists, be closed because of their anti-secular bias. At the same time, the military demanded that compulsory secular education be increased from five to eight years. In April, General Cevik Bir publicly declared that the military's top priority, greater than that of its 10 year battle with Kurdish separatism, was the struggle against anti-secular Islamists. Erbakan and the Welfare Party's brief government proved to be a lightening rod for militant secularists, contributing to the increased polarization of society. Turkey's radical secularists' (much of the military, civil service, and intelligentsia) secularism was not simply based on a

belief in the separation of religion and the state but on an anti-religious secular ideology/belief system, which was as rigid, militant and intolerant as it claimed "Islamic fundamentalism" was. The fear and charges of radical secularists led some to observe: "There is a neurotic edge to the way many secularists talk about the awkward, rather earnest, just-up-from-the-country sort of people who make up most of Mr. Erbakan's following." As in Algeria, the secularist establishment was willing to compromise Turkey's commitment to democracy to prevent Islamists from participating in politics and society and to preserve their power, privilege, and lifestyle rather than allow voters to choose through free and open elections. It was unwilling to take the risk that democracy always involves, one that some leading Turkish secularists had believed possible, if not necessary, if democracy was to prevail: "A marriage between Islam and democracy in Turkey can be consummated if the radical secularists stop trying to impose their preferred life-style and set of values upon the Islamists, and if the latter do not attempt to undermine by word or deed the basic tenets of the secular democratic state in Turkey. A critical mediating role can be played by moderate secularists whose numbers are on the increase." Ayse Kadiogl commented, the Republican elite, the political offspring/disciples of Ataturk, were moved by a "disgust" towards religion even if they sometimes resorted to religious symbols, paying lip service to religion. Sherif Mardin's comparison of this Kemalist attitude to Voltaire's hatred of the Church goes a long way toward understanding the source and living legacy of militant secularism in Turkey.

The military increased the intensity of its campaign in June by conducting briefings for judges, attorneys and the media on the Islamist threat to the Turkish state. Finally, the Erbakan-Ciller coalition collapsed. Erbakan submitted his resignation on June 18, 1997. In February 28 (or 22?), 1998, Turkey's Constitutional Court issued a court order which banned Welfare. Erbakan was expelled from Parliament and barred from participation in the political process for five years. Welfare's assets were seized. He and a number of other leaders were tried for sedition. In February 1998 a new law was passed requiring that children first complete 8 years of secular education program before being permitted to take Quran classes. Weekend and summer Quran courses were banned. Female students and teachers in Islamic schools were barred from wearing the hejab, a ban that already existed in all other areas of education and in government departments.

Egypt

In Egypt, the breathing space of the early Mubarak years had enabled Islamic political and social activism to grow more rapidly, to expand its institutions, and to become part of mainstream society. Perhaps the most significant development was the extent to which the Muslim Brotherhood and other voluntary

(philanthropic) Islamic organizations became effective agents of social and political change, developing alternative socioeconomic institutions and participating in the political process, demonstrating their strength in institution building and popular mobilization.

The Muslim Brothers and other Islamic activists became dominant voices in professional associations of lawyers, doctors, engineers, journalists. Professional syndicates, democratic and voluntary associations of teachers, lawyers, physicians, engineers, and journalists, which have been pillars of Egyptian civil society. As Raymond Baker has observed regarding the Muslim Brotherhood: "Denied access to the political arena, they have made the professional syndicates perhaps the most vibrant institutions of Egyptian civil society."

By the 1990s, the mainstreaming of Islamic activism had produced a professional class whose impact included election to leadership positions in professional associations or syndicates. In September 1992, the Brotherhood's winning of a majority of the board seats in Bar Association elections, long regarded as a bastion of liberalism, signaled this strength and influence. Muslim Brotherhood successes reflected the growing number of younger Islamist-oriented professionals, the appeal of the Brotherhood to professional classes as the only credible opposition, the indifference of many professionals about voting in association elections, and the ability of a well organized, highly motivated minority to "get out the vote" and work with purpose and persistence.

The clearest testimony to the mainstreaming and institutionalization of Islamic revivalism or activism was the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political force in electoral politics. Operating within the political system, moderate activists such as the Muslim Brotherhood couched their criticisms and demands within the context of a call for greater democratization, political representation, social justice and respect for human rights. At the same time, the Mabarak government continued to be a "presidential state." Mubarak won presidential elections with 94% of the vote in an election marred by voting irregularities and with no opposition candidate. The People's Assembly and the bureaucracy continued to be dominated by the Government's National Democratic Party. The government maintained absolute control over the creation and continued existence of political parties; thus, it refused legal recognition of the Muslim Brotherhood as a political party.

Radical violent alternatives, more silent in the early Mabarak period, boldly and directly challenged the regime and Egyptian society in the late 1980s and 1990s. Islamists in Assyut, Minya, Cairo, and Alexandria pressed for an Islamic revolution. Bent upon destabilizing the Egyptian economy and

overthrowing the government, extremists attacked and murdered foreign tourists, Coptic Christians, and government officials as well as bombed banks and government buildings. Mubarak's flexible policy of the late 1980s gave way to more aggressive response to the challenge of both religious extremists (those who advocate the violent overthrow of the government) and moderates (those who participate within the established political and legal framework). In the process the lines between radical and moderate Islamists, state security and the limits of state authority, prosecution of criminals and human rights have often been blurred. The government broadened its battle beyond *the Gamaa Islamiyya, Jihad*, and other radical groups, using harassment and imprisonment to also curb the growing strength and challenge of more moderate Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. It attempted not only to eradicate violent extremism but also increasingly to counter and control the legal institutionalization of Islamic activism politically and socially (professional associations, schools and mosques) in Egyptian society. Its war against "terrorism" led to a broad government crackdown and massive arrests not only of suspected extremists but also of moderate Islamists in an attempt to silence all Islamic opposition. Thousands were held without charge; the Arab Human Rights Organization accused the government of routine torture. The Mubarak government's extended war not just against the terrorism of the Gamaa Islamiya but against Egypt's strongest legal opposition group, the Muslim Brotherhood. One prominent commentator observed that the government sought: "to curtail not only those movements that have carried out violent attacks, but also one that has come to dominate many municipalities, professional and labor associations and university faculties."

The government crusade included legislation in February 1993 to counter the prominence of Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood, in democratic and voluntary associations of teachers, lawyers, physicians, engineers, and journalists. In a move widely seen as an attempt to weaken the influence of Islamists, the government-controlled People's Assembly passed a new educational law. Law 104, on May 31, without warning or consultation, which cancelled the right of Egyptian professors to elect their faculty deans and allows the rectors of universities to appoint them instead. Opponents charged that despite the fact that the Brotherhood had not been particularly active or successful in university faculties, the law is "one step in the government's attempt to eliminate any possibility of the Islamists capturing any more key positions...[and that] If university professors are not to be trusted with electing their own representative, then there is no point in talking about democracy."

The government also moved to control a breeding ground for Islamic opposition, Egypt's private mosques. The vast majority of Egypt's mosques were private (and thus independent in terms of their preachers, content of sermons

and activities) rather than state-controlled. However, the overwhelming majority were private mosques outside government control. Although both Sadat and later Mubarak (in 1985) announced plans to take control of private mosques, given the enormous number of mosques and limited resources, results had been limited. In October 1992, Mubarak's ministry of religious affairs announced that all sermons at state-controlled mosques would be subject to approval by government appointed officials and that the building of private mosques would be curbed. On November 10, 1992, Mohammed Ali Mahgoub, the minister of religious affairs, announced that all private mosques would be brought under the control of the ministry.

The degree and extent of the Mubarak government's concerns about schools and universities as primary sources of Islamic militancy were reflected in a statement by Hussein Kamel Baha Eddin, Minister of Education: "Terrorism starts in the mind... The fundamentalists are planning to brainwash our children to seize power." The government designated education as an issue of national security and initiated a number of policies designed to counter its "Islamist threat." Teachers suspected of being Islamists or having Islamist sympathies were dismissed, retired, or transferred – many to clerical positions in remote areas. A national curriculum was imposed; and, in a reversal of previous policy, an attempt was made to introduce English and Western secular values to provide a window on development as well as "a `culture shock' to upset the wave of fundamentalism sweeping Egypt's schools."

Iran & the Gulf

Iran and the Gulf provide their own distinctive experiences. Post revolutionary Iran saw the suppression of political and religious dissent by militant clergy, from royalists to the *Tudeh* party, from secularist opposition to a variety of religiously oriented officials and leaders senior ayatollahs like Mehdi Bazargan, the Islamic Republic's first Prime Minister and Ayatollah Shariatmadari. However, despite restrictions parliamentary elections and heated parliamentary debate continued undisturbed and gradually during Hashmi Rafsanjani's presidency increased liberalization occurred amidst a struggle between more progressive/pragmatic forces (led by Rafsanjani) and militant ideologues (led by Khomeini's successor Ayatollah Khamenei).

The election of Mohammed Khatami as president by more than 70% of the population signaled the third phase of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Khomeini, Rafsanjani/Khamenei, and Khatami). Significant voter support came from women and younger people among others who desired a more open society. President Khatami has signaled his responsiveness by emphasizing two themes: civil society and civilizational dialogue. The former is equated with

democratization, the rule of law, increased women's rights and respect for human rights. The latter refers to attempts to reestablish or strengthen cultural and in time political relations with the United States and Europe.

Though final authority remains in the hands of Ayatollah Khamenei, often referred to as the "Supreme Leader," Khatami and his Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Aetollah Mohajerani, institutionalized these issues through official statements, in speeches and in national conferences such as the conference on Islam and Civil Society in January 1998. In several prominent cases involving attempts by more militant factions to silence critics like Ayatollah Montazeri, once designated as Khomeini's heir, and Ibrahim Yazdi, a former foreign minister during the early days of the Islamic Republic and leader of the Bazargan-founded Freedom Party, Khatami quietly pressed issues of civil society, particularly rule of law, to foster their release. While Iranians have experienced greater freedoms and "space," more militant factions in the government have fought back arresting, trying and imprisoning Khatami supporters like the former Mayor of Teheran and the Interior Minister. They have closed newspapers, encouraged confrontations on university campuses, refused to approve the credentials of potential electoral candidates.

The situation in much of the Gulf has been quite different. In most countries, political and social organization and participation in society remain controlled by the state/ruling families. There is little non-state approved space/activity. In recent years, Saudi Arabia and Oman have created a *majlis* or consultative assembly, appointed by the ruler. Bahrain has resisted calls for a reopening of parliament and harshly suppressed voices of dissent. Only Kuwait and Yemen have held parliamentary elections. Few Gulf countries permit political parties, unions, professional associations, or a free press.

Government Responses to Civil Society in the Post-Gulf War Period

The record of Islamic republics in Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan reinforced for some old images and fears of the spread of religious authoritarianism. Muslim rulers pondered the challenge of the growing power of Islamism in the institutions of mainstream society and Europe faced the specter of an Islamist led state in its midst in Turkey. Democratization became a major issue in Muslim politics. It led not only to political debate but also to a military takeover and a virtual civil war in Algeria, the suppression of Islamists in Tunisia and Egypt, and a military/secular confrontation with Turkey's first Islamist prime minister which drove him out of office and the subsequent banning of the Refah Party. In its most extreme forms, the struggle sometimes appeared to be a battle between "secular fundamentalists" and "Islamic fundamentalists" which

curtailed political participation and strictly limited, if not suppressed, the development of the culture and institutions of civil society.

Threat or Challenge to Civil Society?

In contrast to other parts of the world, increased calls for greater political participation and democratization in the Middle East in the late 1990s were met by empty rhetoric or repression by many rulers and by strong ambivalence or silence in the West. The threat of "Islamic fundamentalism" increased authoritarianism and suppression of Islamic parties or groups in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Turkey. Western governments and policymakers often stood by ambivalent, if not compliant.

Fear of fundamentalism, like responses to the communist threat, made strange bedfellows, providing a ready excuse for repression and the violation of human rights. Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Turkey and Pakistan (under Benazir Bhutto) as well as Israel warned of a regional and international Islamic threat in a bid to curry western aid or excuse their repression of Islamists. Moreover, as one observer noted "Israel which for years won American and European backing as a bulwark against the spread of communism throughout the Middle East, is now projecting itself as the West's defense against militant Islam, a movement it is portraying as an even greater danger." Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin justified the expulsion of 415 Palestinians:

Our struggle against murderous Islamic terror is also meant to awaken the world, which is lying in slumber....We call on all nations, all peoples to devote their attention to the greater danger inherent in Islamic fundamentalism...This is a real and serious danger that threatens world peace in future years...we stand on the line of fire against the danger of fundamentalist Islam.

Equating Khomeiniism with a pan-Islamic threat and drawing parallels with communism, Shimon Peres declared, "Since the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union, we consider Khomeiniism the greatest danger the Middle East is facing -- not only us but the Arabs as well...it has many of the characteristics of communism. It is fanatic, it is ideological ... Most of all, it has the same inclination to export its ideas."

Israel and its Arab neighbors warned that a resurgent Iran exported revolution throughout much of the Muslim world, Sudan, the West Bank and Gaza, Algeria, Central Asia as well as Europe and America. Indeed Egypt's Hosni Mubarak called for a "global alliance" against this menace. Many pointed to the World Trade Center bombing in New York City and subsequent

arrests of Muslim fundamentalists for conspiracy to set off other bombs as further proof of the international and anti-western nature of the threat.

A Triple Threat?

Islam is often portrayed as a triple threat: political, civilizational, and demographic. Fear of Iran's export of the revolution in the 1980s was succeeded by fears of a monolithic, international pan-Islamic movement at the heart of which is an Iranian-Sudanese axis: "The fear is of the militant brand of Islam being espoused by Iran, practiced in Sudan and spread by organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood in and from countries that have turned a blind eye to their activities." In the 1990s, despite Iran's relative failure in exporting revolution, talk of a global Islamic threat increased, combining fear of violent revolution with that of Algerian-style electoral victories. France's Raymond Aron's warning in the 1980s of an Islamic revolutionary wave generated by the fanaticism of the prophet and Cyrus Vance's concern about an "Islamic-Western war were succeeded by Charles Krauthammer's assertion of a global Islamic threat of "fundamentalist Koran-waving Khomeniism," led by the new commintern, Iran.

The Ayatollah Khomeini's condemnation to death of Salman Rushdie combined with Saddam Hussein's call for an Islamic holy war against the West during the Gulf War reinforced fears of a political and cultural confrontation. This was magnified by some who reduced contemporary realities to the playing out of ancient rivalries, political confrontations rooted in a clash of civilizations.

It should now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations – perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both.

Muslim-Western relations and conflicts have been placed within the context of an historical confrontation in which Islam is again pitted against the West, against "our Judeo-Christian and secular West," rather than specific political and socioeconomic grievances. Thus, what can the West really do to respond to what is obviously primarily emotional and "irrational," an assault upon the West by peoples who are peculiarly driven by their passions and hatred? As James Piscatori, in explaining this phenomenon, observed:

Whether it was the Ottoman attempt to thwart Christian nationalists or the Muslim attempt to gain independence from the West, Islam was fanatical because it ran counter to imperial interests. But it was the converse formulation that became the standard explanation of Muslim conduct: Islam was hostile to

the West because it was fanatical...Consequently, Muslims came to be seen as a uniformly emotional and sometimes illogical race that moved as one body and spoke with one voice.

The growth of Muslim populations in Europe and America has resulted in Islam becoming the second largest religion in Germany and France and the third largest in Britain and America. Disputes over Muslim minority rights, demonstrations and clashes during the Salman Rushdie affair, the World Trade Center and conviction of Shaykh Omar Abd al-Rahman and others of plotting to blow up major sites in America as well as bombings in Paris by Algeria's Armed Islamic Guard have been exploited by strident voices of the right -- politicians like France's LePen, neo-Nazi youth in Germany, and right-wing political commentators in the United States. One European expert warned:

While Europe has overcome the cold war ... it now risks creating new divisions and conflicts, such as a white, wealthy and Christian "Fortress Europe" pitted against a largely poor, Islamic world. That could lead to terrorism and another forty years of small, hot wars...

The Diversity of Muslim Politics

The realities of Muslim politics and societies refute images of a monolithic, pan-Islamic threat. Despite a common "Islamic" orientation, governments reveal little unity of purpose in interstate and international relations due to conflicting national interests or priorities. Qaddafi was a bitter enemy of Anwar Sadat and Jafar al- Numayri at the very time that all were projecting their "Islamic images". Today he remains at odds with Sudan's Hasan Turabi, portoayed in the press as the "Ayatollah of Africa," as well as with Egypt's Hosni Mubarak. Khomeini's Islamic Republic consistently called for the overthrow of the House of Saud and other Gulf states on Islamic grounds. In 1998, it reversed its policy and moved to mend its fences with Saudi Arabia while at the same time denouncing the excesses of the most recently declared Islamic government of the Taleban in Afghanistan.

Islamically identified governments also reflect differing relationships with the West. Libya and Iran's relationship with the West, and the United States in particular, has often been confrontational. At the same time, the U.S. has had strong allies in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Kuwait, Pakistan and Bahrain. National interest and regional politics rather than ideology or religion remain the major determinants in the formulation of foreign policy.

Civil Society, Democratization, and Foreign Policy

As we have seen, in recent years Islam has reemerged as a significant political and social force in civil society. Islamic candidates have been elected prime ministers and speakers of parliaments, cabinet ministers, and parliamentarians in Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Kuwait, Pakistan, Jordan, Yemen, Malaysia, Turkey, Lebanon. The performance of Islamist groups in national and municipal elections since the late 1980s has defied those who had insisted that Islamic movements were unrepresentative and would not attract voters. The FIS sweep of Algerian elections and the likelihood that they would come to power through the ballot box as did the subsequent election of Necmettin Erbakan of the Refah (Welfare) Party as Prime Minister of Turkey exacerbated the fears of many rulers in the Muslim and in the West. The Algerian military's intervention and repression of FIS, the Turkish military's role in forcing the resignation of the Erbakan government and the subsequent banning of the Refah Party, North African and Egyptian governments' indiscriminate crackdown on their Islamic movements, as well as Western governments' concerns have been justified by the charge that Islamists were out to "hijack democracy."

Ironically, participation within the system and relative success made movements more, rather than less, of a threat in the eyes of some. For leaders in the West, democracy raises the prospect of old and reliable friends or client states being transformed into more independent and less predictable nations. This prospect generated a fear that Islamic governments would undermine stability in the Middle East and broader Muslim world, make Western access to oil less secure, and threaten the security of Israel. Lack of enthusiasm or support for political liberalization in the Middle East and broader Muslim world has been rationalized by the claim that both Arab culture and Islam are inherently anti-democratic (an issue never raised to a comparable degree with regard to the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, or Africa). The proof offered is the lack of a democratic tradition, more specifically, the paucity of democracies in the Muslim world. Why the glaring absence of democratic governments? The political realities of the Muslim world have not been conducive to the development of democratic traditions and institutions. European colonial rule and post-independence national governments headed by military and ex-military rulers or monarchs have contributed to a legacy which has had little concern for political participation and the building of strong democratic institutions. National unity and stability as well as political legitimacy have been undermined by the artificial nature of modern states whose national boundaries were often determined or drawn by colonial powers and whose rulers were either placed on their thrones by Europe or simply seized power for themselves. Weak economies, illiteracy, and high unemployment, especially among the younger

generation, exacerbate the situation, undermining confidence in governments and increasing the appeal of "Islamic fundamentalism."

Experts and policymakers who question whether Islamic movements will use electoral politics to "hijack democracy" ("One man, one vote, one time) often fail to show equal concern that few rulers in the region have been democratically elected and that many who speak of democracy only believe in "risk free democracy." They permit political participation and liberalization as long there is no risk of a strong opposition (secular or religious) or a potential loss of power. Failure to appreciate that the issue of the hijacking of democracy is a two way street was reflected in the responses (an awkward silence or support) of many western governments and experts for the Algerian military's intervention and cancellation of the results of the democratic electoral process and the Turkish military's suppression of the Refah party.

Perception of a global "Islamic threat" contributes to support for, silence, or "strategic" acceptance by Western governments of repression of Islamists and their institutions by governments in the Middle East and the broader Muslim world and thus to the creation of a "self-fulfilling prophecy." The thwarting of a participatory political process by governments that cancel elections or repress populist Islamic movements fosters radicalization and extremism. Many Islamists who experience regime violence (harassment, imprisonment, torture) conclude that seeking "democracy" is a dead end, become convinced that force or violence is their only recourse against repressive regimes. Official silence or economic and political support for regimes is read as complicity and a sign of the West's "double standard" for the implementation of democracy. Regime repression and violation of human rights and a compliant U.S. or western policy towards such actions creates conditions that lead to political violence. It seemingly validates prior contention and prophecy that Islamic movements are inherently violent, anti-democratic and a threat to national and regional stability. More constructive and democratic strategies are possible. The strength of Islamic organizations and parties is as much due to their constituting the only viable voice and vehicle for opposition in relatively closed political systems. The electoral strength of Tunisia's Renaissance Party, Algeria's FIS, Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood, or Turkey's Refah party has come not only from a hard core of dedicated followers but also from the fact that they were the most credible and effective alternative "game in town." Thus, their electoral support included both those who voted for their Islamic agenda as well as those who simply wished to vote against the government. Opening up the political system and strengthening the institutions of civil society fosters the growth and strength of competing opposition parties, alternative choices, and thus weakens Islamic parties' monopoly of opposition voters. Promotion of the values and institutions

of civil society is a hedge against the perpetuation of a culture of authoritarianism, secular or religious.

Finally, the realities of a more open marketplace, having to compete for votes or coming to power and having to rule amidst diverse interests can force Islamic organizations (as they often do secular political parties) to adapt or broaden their ideology and programs in response to domestic realities, diverse constituencies and interests. The history of many contemporary movements reflects this reality. Mawlana Mawdudi, founder of the Jamaat-i Islami, was an early critic of both nationalism and democracy. Subsequently, the Jamaat as also the Muslim Brotherhood came to accept and "Islamize" democracy, participating in elections and using it as a yardstick to critique incumbent governments. Islamic movements like Tunisia's Ennahda, Turkey's Refah Party, Islamists in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, Bangladesh, Malaysia and Indonesia have also followed suit, changing and evolving ideologically. These changes have not always resulted in similar outcomes as witnessed by the divergent views of the Muslim Brotherhood and Ennahda as compared to the Jamaat-i Islami regarding the role of women in public life. All are challenged to recognize that democratization and the building of strong civil societies in the Muslim world are part of a process of experimentation, necessarily accompanied by failure as well as success. The transformation of the West from feudal monarchies to democratic nation states took time, trial and error. It was accompanied by political as well as intellectual revolutions that rocked both state and church. It was a long, drawn-out process, among contending voices and factions with competing visions and interests.

Islam and Pluralism

A critical issue in Muslim politics today is that of pluralism. Historically, the monotheistic visions of both Islam and Christianity and the belief of each that it possessed the final and complete revelation of God and was charged to call all to salvation resulted in competing claims and missions and produced theological and political conflict. In the 19th and 20th centuries, much of mainstream Christianity grappled with and came to grips with the realities of pluralism in the modern world. The outcome was the result of a process of reform in which doctrines were reexamined and reinterpreted. For example, Roman Catholicism in the late 19th and first half of the 20th century resisted and condemned much of what was termed "modernism" (from popular sovereignty and elections to pluralism). However, in the late 1960s at Vatican II, the church for the first time officially recognized and accepted pluralism.

For Muslims today the issue of pluralism is directly related to the status of non-Muslims in Islamic law as *dhimmi*, protected minorities, as well as that of

Muslim minority communities living under non-Muslim rule or non-Muslim governments. While historically Islam often proved more flexible in tolerating non-Muslim (People of the Book) as minorities whose protected (*dhimmi*) status enabled them to live and practice their faith under Muslim rule, that status amounts to second class citizenship in the modern world. In addition, the persecution and suppression of non-Muslims by some Muslim governments and by some Islamic movements underscores the need for reinterpretation (*ijtihad*) and reform (*islah*) if the rights of all citizens are to be guaranteed.

Today, due to an unprecedented number of Muslim immigrants and refugees, there are more Muslim minority communities in existence across the globe than at any previous time in history. While some Muslims wish some day to return, most face living in new non-Muslim homelands permanently. This reality raises many questions of citizenship: from loyalty and political participation to living in societies whose laws are not based upon Islamic law. Thus, for Muslims today and for Muslim reformers, pluralism is a critical concern both for Muslim majority countries and for Muslim minority communities. From Egypt to Indonesia, scholars debate and reinterpret Islamic doctrines and laws. As with other faiths, the lines of the debate are often drawn between traditionalists, who wish to simply follow the authority of the past and modernists or reformers who argue the need and acceptability of a fresh interpretation of Islamic sources, a reformulation of Islam.

Related to a re-examination of the concept of pluralism is that of tolerance. Historically, religious tolerance has tended to be simply equated with non-persecution of others, allowing or suffering their existence. However, the realities of contemporary life in a global society require that tolerance be based more genuinely on mutual understanding and respect, the ability to agree to disagree. Reflecting on the true meaning and basis of tolerance, Singapore' Association of Muslim Professionals noted: "We need to emphasize that endeavours which merely promote "tolerance" of cultural differences or merely impart disjointed "quaint facts" about another ethnic group contribute little to - and perhaps in fact undermine - the achievement of multi-culturalism or inter-cultural understanding." One need not deny essential religious, ideological or political differences of be able to function as neighbors domestically and internationally. Differences of opinion and opposition need not be perceived as a threat.

A diverse group of Muslim intellectuals and activists (Rashid Ghannoushi, Muhammad Selim al-Awa, Yusuf Qardawi, Mahmud Ayoub, Anwar Ibrahim. Kamal Aboul Magd, Fahmy Howeidy, Abdurahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, Abdulaziz Sachedina, Fathi Osman) have produced a growing body of literature that reexamines Islamic traditions and addresses

issues of pluralism both at the theoretical and practical levels. Recognizing the need to open up the one party or authoritarian political systems that prevail as well as face the multi-religious and multicultural demographic realities of their societies, they have both reinterpreted Islamic principles to reconcile Islam with democratization and multiparty political systems and recast and expanded traditional doctrine regarding the status (*dhimmi*) of nonoMuslim minorities. In addition to employing traditional concepts like consultation (*shura*) and consensus (*ijma*) to limit the authority of rulers, words like party (*hizb*, party) have been reinterpreted, acknowledging a positive connotation and applying it to political parties (*Hizb Ennahda*)and religious groups (*Hizbollah*) rather than that of difference and division which undermine rather than promote the good of society.

Islamists and other Muslim intellectuals have marshaled scripture and history to argue that Islam supports the equality and pluralism of the human community. Quranic passages which affirm that God chose to create the world with different nations and tribes (Sura 5:48, 30:22, 48:13) are emphasized. They argue that the pluralism of the Quran was in fact practiced by Muhammad and the early community in its recognition of and extension of freedom of religion, worship, and protection (*dhimmi*) to non-Muslims. Some, like Professor Mahmoud Ayoub, assert that rather than implying a second-class citizenship, the word *dhimma* (which is not in the Quran but found in the *hadith*) was intended to designate a special covenant of protection between Muslims, on the one hand and Christians and Jews, on the other. Others note that the term *dhimma* refers to the form of a covenant not its content and that content can be redefined today in light of new realities.

Increasingly, both the writings of Muslim intellectuals and the experience of Islam in Southeast Asia become more relevant to the broader Muslim world. The multireligious and multiethnic societies of Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, and Singapore in diverse ways provide a substantial example of pluralism -- the issues, problems and possibilities for change, accommodation, and coexistence. While Malaysia did experience Malay-Chinese riots in 1969, Malaysians continue to construct a Muslim majority society in which non-Muslims have enjoyed a degree of political and religious equality as well as democracy unknown in many parts of the Muslim world. Indonesia's de-politicization of Islam has ironically engendered both a deeper Islamization of Indonesian society and a diverse group of voices (Muslim and Christian) committed to a pluralist society. The conflicts and contradictions of this process were seen strikingly during the last days of Soeharto in the scapegoating and attacks on Chinese. They have been equally visible in the and Muslim-Christian conflicts in 1999 and 2000 under its new elected president Abdurahman Wahid, the liberal leader

of the Nahdatul Ulama, a religious organization with more than 30 million members and a champion of religious and political pluralism.

Just as Muslim politics reveal the profound debate and conflict over issues of political liberalization, democratization, pluralism, the rights of women and minorities, so too a generation of Muslim intellectuals and leaders is attempting to reexamine and reinterpret their faith in light of modern realities debating many of these critical questions. Whether this new current will prevail in the face of authoritarian regimes, conservative religious authorities, and secular forces remains to be seen.

The Empowerment of Muslim Women

Islamic activists and intellectuals have in recent years engaged in a reassessment of women's status and role in society. They represent a range of positions. If some advocate a restoration of past practices, others opt for a process of reformation, emphasizing not only greater gender equality in worship and piety but also in education and employment. As previously noted, Islamic movements like the Muslim Brotherhoods of Egypt and Jordan and Tunisia's Ennahda have emphasized increased access to education and employment. Women are becoming more visible in the councils of Islamic organizations. Islamist women are increasingly found in the professions (physicians, journalists, lawyers, engineers, social workers, university professors) and as administrators and staff in schools, clinics, and social welfare agencies.

Today Muslim women, representing many ideological orientations, are increasingly writing and speaking out for themselves on women's issues. They seek to empower themselves not just as defenders of women's rights but as interpreters of the tradition. Many argue that patriarchy as much as religion, indeed patriarchy linked to religion, accounts for many customs affecting gender relations which became long-standing traditions. The primary interpreters of Islam (of the Quran, traditions of the Prophet, and law) were males functioning in and reflecting the values of patriarchal societies. Religion was linked to patriarchy both through its interpreter-scholars and their appeal to Islam to legitimate their interpretations or formulations of doctrine and law.

Women scholars and activists draw on the writings and thought not only of male scholars but also, and most importantly, a growing number of Muslim women scholars and activists who utilize an Islamic discourse to address issues ranging from dress and education to employment and political participation. In areas as diverse as the Arab world, Iran, South and Southeast Asia, women have formed their own women's organizations, created their own magazines and contributed to newspapers in which they set forth new religious and social

interpretations and visions of gender relations. Organizations like Women Living Under Muslim Laws (Geneva) and Sisters in Islam (Malaysia) have become visible and vocal representatives within their own countries and internationally, writing, publishing, speaking out and participating in international conferences such as the Cairo conference on population and Beijing's conference on women. Though small in number, they may well, as has occurred in other religions, prove to be an effective vanguard in a long term process of reassessment, reform and transformation.

Conclusion

Today, we are witnessing a new historical transformation in the Muslim world as many seeking more autonomy and broader participation in public life, pursue greater political participation and/or develop institutions of civil society. Risks exist, for there can be no "risk free democracy." Those who fear the unknown, what specific Islamic movements in power will be like or how they will act, have a legitimate concern. However, if we fear their suppression of opposition, lack of pluralism and tolerance, and violation of human rights, then the same concern must apply equally to the plight of those Islamists who have shown a willingness to participate within the political process under current regimes in Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Turkey, Jordan, and Yemen where the results of free parliamentary elections and the institutions of civil society (non-state political organization, professional associations, NGOs, financial institutions, the press and media) have been undermined or aborted. It is equally important to note that Islamist governments (the Taliban in Afghanistan, the NIF-backed government in Sudan, and Khomeini's Iran) are vivid reminders that religious authoritarianism is as dangerous as secular authoritarianism.

Governments in the Muslim world, who espouse political liberalization and democracy, are challenged to promote and strengthen the development of civil society -- those institutions, values, and culture that are the foundation for true participatory government. They must be willing to allow alternative political voices to function freely in society and express their opinions and dissent through the formation of political parties, private associations, newspapers, and the media. Islamic activists and movements are challenged to move beyond slogans to programs. They must become more self critical in speaking out not only against local government abuses but also against those of Islamic regimes in Sudan, Afghanistan, and until recently Iran as well as acts of terrorism committed in the name of Islam by extremists. They are challenged to provide an Islamic rationale and policy that would extend to their opposition and to minorities the very principles of pluralism and political participation which they demand for themselves. The extent to which the growth of Islamic revivalism has been accompanied in some countries by attempts to restrict

women's rights and their public roles, the recent record of discrimination against the Bahai in Iran, the Ahmadi in Pakistan, and Christians in Sudan as well as sectarian conflict between Muslims and Christians in Egypt, Sudan, Pakistan and Nigeria pose serious questions of religious pluralism, human rights, and tolerance.

The contemporary Islamic revival has challenged many of the presupposition of Western liberal secularism and development theory that modernization means the inexorable or progressive secularization and Westernization of society. Too often analysis and policymaking have been shaped by a liberal secularism which fails to recognize that it too represents a worldview, not the worldview or paradigm, and can easily degenerate into a "secularist fundamentalism" which assumes its principles to be a self-evident and universal truth or norm. Thus alternative worldviews or ideologies are easily dismissed as abnormal, deviant, irrational, and a "fundamentalist" or extremist threat.

Several factors must be kept in mind when speaking of the compatibility or incompatibility of Islam and democracy. Those who argue a priori that Islam and democracy are incompatible must recall that the same could be said, and indeed was said, by a variety of secular and religious intellectuals and leaders in the past about Judaism and Christianity. Both these traditions, their beliefs and values, were formulated long before modern democracy and, indeed, were used in the past to support and legitimate non-democratic states and empires, from divine right monarchies to forms of dictatorship in which notions of modern pluralism and human rights were unknown. Yet, both Judaism and Christianity, like all of the world's religions have historically proven to be open to reformulation and change as the sacred texts and beliefs of the religious tradition are adapted and applied in changing historical contexts. As a result, many believers today, lacking an historical awareness of the development of their traditions, believe that Judaism and Christianity are not only not incompatible but even are the sources of western democratic traditions. The Muslim world also knew pre-modern authoritarianism, followed by European colonialism which, despite its protestations of a "mission to civilize," was not motivated by a desire to promote civil society and democratization. Moreover, as noted above, the emergence of modern Muslim states saw authoritarian rulers often placed on their thrones of power by European colonial powers. Europe along with America, despite its official commitment to the spread of democracy, continued to tolerate and support dictatorships and authoritarian rule in the Muslim world (as in many other parts of the developing world) during the post-independence and Cold war periods out of self interest to block the spread of communism or to assure access to oil.

With regard to the compatibility of Islamic belief and values with democracy, some Muslims, as well as non-Muslims, assert their incompatibility. They range from the conservative monarchy of King Fahd in Saudi Arabia, who sees democracy as a western concept incommensurate with Islamic traditions, to militant movements like Hizb al-Tahrir. Many others in the worldwide Muslim community believe that Islam is capable of reinterpretation (ijtihad) and that traditional concepts of consultation (shura), consensus (ijma), and legal principles such as the general welfare (maslaha) provide the bases for the development of modern Muslim notions or authentic, more indigenously-rooted, versions of democracy. Some reinterpret traditional beliefs to essentially legitimate western generated forms of democracy; others wish to develop their own more indigenously rooted forms of political participation and democracy appropriate to Islamic values and realities.

The history of Islam's generating and supporting new intellectual traditions as well as government and social institutions is a matter of record. Here it is important to remind those who speak of democracy as if it were a self evident truth, univocal in meaning and expressed in a single model, that (1) the introduction of democracy was accompanied by much skepticism among many rulers, elites, and religious leaders alike and (2) the western experience has known many forms of democracy from Athens to modern western interpretations and models operative in Europe and America. It would be more correct when speaking of democratization in global politics or, more specifically, of Islam and democracy to first ask "which democracy"? The existence of different meanings and understandings of democratization as well as the danger of exploitation of democracy by authoritarian governments and demagogues alike must be seen as neither foreign to the West nor to other societies.

In the final analysis, as is self-evident, it will remain for Muslims to determine the nature of their governments, to introduce or refine forms of political participation or democratization that seem appropriate. While there may be much room for differences and debate, the challenge today is for all parties or factions, despite political and ideological differences, to commit themselves to the creation and strengthening of the culture, values, and institutions of civil society.

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